UNITED
NATIONS

E

Economic and Social Council

Distr.
GENERAL

E/1991/84
24 May 1991

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

First regular session of 1991
13-31 May and 17-21 June 1991
Agenda item 6

WORLD SOCIAL SITUATION

Report of the Second (Social) Committee

1. The Second (Social) Committee considered the question of the world social situation (agenda item 6) at its 1st to 6th, 9th, 11th, 13th and 14th meetings, from 13 to 16 and from 20 to 23 May 1991. It had before it the following documents:

(a) Interim report of the Secretary-General on the world social situation (A/46/56-E/1991/6 and Corr.1);

(b) Report of the Secretary-General on the work being done within the United Nations system on improving quantitative and qualitative indicators on social conditions and standards of living (A/46/137-E/1991/40);

(c) Report of the Commission for Social Development on its thirty-second session (E/1991/26). 1/

2. At the 1st to 6th meetings, the Committee held a general discussion on the item concurrently with item 7 (Social development). At the 1st meeting, on 13 May, the Committee heard an introductory statement by the Director of the Social Development Division of the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs and by the Director of the General Analysis and Policies Division of the Department of International Economic and Social Affairs.

1/ To be issued as Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 1991, Supplement No. 6.

3. Also at the 1st meeting, statements were made by the representative of France and the observer for Luxembourg (on behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that are members of the European Community).

4. At the 2nd meeting, on 14 May, statements were made by the representatives of Chile, Algeria and China and the observer for Australia (on behalf also of Canada and New Zealand). The representative of the World Bank made a statement. The observer for the World Federation of Trade Unions, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council, category I, also made a statement.

5. At the 3rd meeting, on 15 May, statements were made by the representatives of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, Morocco, Peru, Sweden (on behalf of the Nordic countries), Mexico, the Bahamas, Trinidad and Tobago, Yugoslavia, Cameroon, Turkey, Czechoslovakia and Burkina Faso.

6. At the 4th meeting, on 15 May, statements were made by the representatives of Spain, Jamaica, Tunisia, Indonesia, Pakistan, Canada, Romania, the United States of America and Ecuador and the observers for Suriname, Venezuela, the Philippines, Ghana, the Dominican Republic and Uganda.

7. At the 5th meeting, on 16 May, statements were made by the representatives of Austria, Malaysia, the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, Bahrain and Japan and the observers for the Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic and Mongolia.

8. At the 6th meeting, on 16 May, statements were made by the representative of Nicaragua and the observer for Costa Rica. Statements were also made by the observers for the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions and the International Alliance of Women - Equal Rights, Equal Responsibilities, non-governmental organizations in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council, category I.

World social situation

9. At the 9th meeting, on 20 May, the observer for Ghana, 2/ on behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that are members of the Group of 77, introduced a draft resolution (E/1991/C.2/L.1) entitled "World social situation". In introducing the draft resolution, he revised operative paragraph 4 by replacing the words "and can be considered by the Council" by the words "for consideration by the Council".

2/ In accordance with rule 72 of the rules of procedure of the Economic and Social Council.

10. At the 13th meeting, on 22 May, the observer for Ghana, on behalf of the sponsors, introduced a revised draft resolution (E/1991/C.2/L.1/Rev.1), which incorporated the following changes:

(a) A new preambular paragraph was inserted between the fourth and fifth preambular paragraphs, which read as follows:

"Bearing in mind that some developing countries have been able to achieve some economic and social progress";

(b) In the seventh preambular paragraph, the words "an essential priority for the United Nations and the international community" were replaced by the words "an essential priority for national policies, the United Nations and the international community";

(c) Operative paragraph 6, which read:

"6. Recommends that prior to the preparation of the 1993 report an inter-agency meeting be convened to ensure that an integrated interdisciplinary focus is provided to serve as a source of data for the report",

was replaced by the following text:

"6. Recommends that the draft of the 1993 report be reviewed by the Administrative Committee on Coordination to ensure that an integrated interdisciplinary focus is given to serve as a data source for the report".

11. At the same meeting, the Committee adopted the revised draft resolution (see para. 20 below, draft resolution I).

12. After the revised draft resolution was adopted, the observer for Ghana, on behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that are members of the Group of 77, made a statement.

Humanitarian assistance to Iraqi refugees and displaced persons

13. At the 11th meeting, on 21 May, the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran, on behalf of Australia, 2/ Canada, Indonesia, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Japan, Kuwait and New Zealand, introduced a draft resolution (E/1991/C.2/L.7) entitled "Humanitarian assistance to Iraqi refugees and displaced persons".

14. At the same meeting, the representative of Iraq informed the Committee that his delegation had submitted amendments to the draft resolution. The amendments, which were subsequently circulated in document E/1991/C.2/L.10, called for:

(a) The replacement of the second preambular paragraph, which read:

"Aware that the majority of Iraqi refugees and displaced persons are women, the elderly and children, who are particularly vulnerable to hardship",

by the following text:

"Aware that the problem of Iraqi refugees and displaced persons is connected to the consequences of the Gulf war, bearing in mind that war victims are usually civilians (women, the elderly and children)";

(b) The addition of the words "as well as the agreement of 18 April 1991 between the United Nations and the Government of Iraq" at the end of operative paragraph 3;

(c) The insertion of the following new operative paragraph between operative paragraphs 3 and 4:

"Welcomes the cooperation of the Government of Iraq with other international agencies, including non-governmental organizations, in facilitating their objectives in order to help the refugees to return to their homes and noting in this regard the ongoing negotiations with the Kurdish leaders".

15. At the 13th meeting, on 22 May, the representative of Iraq withdrew the amendments (E/1991/C.2/L.10) to draft resolution E/1991/C.2/L.7 and stated that his delegation would accept the draft resolution.

16. At the 14th meeting, on 23 May, the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran, on behalf of the sponsors, orally revised paragraph 5 of the draft resolution by replacing the words, "Calls upon all States and the United Nations system" by the words "Calls upon States concerned and the United Nations system".

17. At the same meeting, the Committee adopted the draft resolution (see para. 20 below, draft resolution II).

18. After the draft resolution was adopted, statements were made by the representatives of Iraq and the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Report of the Secretary-General on the work being done within the United Nations system on improving quantitative and qualitative indicators on social conditions and standards of living

19. At the 14th meeting, on 23 May, on the proposal of the Chairman, the Committee took note of the report of the Secretary-General on the work being done within the United Nations system on improving quantitative and

qualitative indicators on social conditions and standards of living (A/46/137-E/1991/40) (see para. 21 below, draft decision).

RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE SECOND (SOCIAL) COMMITTEE

20. The Second (Social) Committee recommends to the Economic and Social Council the adoption of the following draft resolutions:

DRAFT RESOLUTION I

World social situation

The Economic and Social Council,

Recalling General Assembly resolutions 2542 (XXIV) of 11 December 1969, 40/100 of 13 December 1985 and 45/87 of 14 December 1990 and Economic and Social Council resolutions 1987/52 of 28 May 1987 and 1989/72 of 24 May 1989,

Recalling also General Assembly resolution 44/56 of 8 December 1989, in which the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to submit an interim report to it in 1991, through the Commission for Social Development and the Council,

Bearing in mind the primary importance of a well-balanced report on the world social situation for increasing international awareness of the efforts being made towards achieving the goals of social progress and better standards of living, established in the Charter of the United Nations, as well as of the obstacles to further progress,

Deeply concerned by the continued worsening of the economic situation in many developing countries, particularly the least developed countries, as evidenced by the significant decline in living conditions, the persistence and increase of widespread poverty in a large number of those countries and the decline of their main social and economic indicators,

Bearing in mind that some developing countries have been able to achieve some economic and social progress,

Desirous that the pace of development in the developing countries be accelerated substantially in order to enable those countries to achieve their social objectives, especially those of meeting the basic need for food, housing, education, employment and health care and winning the struggle against the scourges that endanger the health and well-being of their populations,

Recognizing that progress in the social and economic fields constitutes an essential priority for national policies, the United Nations and the international community, as well as a prerequisite for international development and peace,

Believing that there is a need for greater effort by the United Nations system to study and disseminate accurate and balanced data and material on the existing world social situation, particularly with regard to emerging trends and institutional structures that have an impact on social development,

Having considered the interim report of the Secretary-General on the world social situation, 3/

Mindful of the need to reflect objectively on the sensitivity and importance of the social problems of developing countries,

1. Notes with concern that the interim report of the Secretary-General on the world social situation did not adequately focus on the continuing deterioration of the economic and social situation that constitutes the primary tendency in many developing countries, in particular the least developed countries;

2. Also notes with concern that the interim report did not sufficiently take into account the concerns and guidelines specified in paragraph 4 of Council resolution 1989/72;

3. Reaffirms the request set forth in paragraph 4 of Council resolution 1989/72 that, in preparing the next report on the world social situation, the Secretary-General give high priority to an analysis of the main indicators of social progress and standards of living and make a comprehensive analysis of the main causes and circumstances that explain negative trends in those indicators, and reaffirms also that chapters devoted to the study of specific social problems must be related to global economic and social situations, taking into account both national and international conditions;

4. Requests the Secretary-General to reorient the draft framework for the 1993 report on the world social situation so that the draft framework is in consonance with the requests set forth in paragraph 4 of Council resolution 1989/72, for consideration by the Council at its regular session of 1992;

5. Also requests the Secretary-General, in preparing the 1993 report, to take into account the intrinsic relationship between economic growth and social development and to analyse in depth the economic problems of the developing countries and the impact of those problems on the world social situation;

6. Recommends that the draft of the 1993 report be reviewed by the Administrative Committee on Coordination to ensure that an integrated interdisciplinary focus is given to serve as a data source for the report;

3/ A/46/56-E/1991/6 and Corr.1.

7. Invites all appropriate organs, organizations and bodies of the United Nations system to cooperate fully with the Secretary-General in the preparation of the 1993 report by making available all relevant information pertaining to their respective areas of competence.

DRAFT RESOLUTION II

Humanitarian assistance to Iraqi refugees and displaced persons

The Economic and Social Council,

Expressing deep concern about the plight of Iraqi refugees and displaced persons,

Aware that the majority of Iraqi refugees and displaced persons are women, the elderly and children, who are particularly vulnerable to hardship,

Acknowledging the fact that coping with the enormous needs of Iraqi refugees is far beyond the capacities of host countries,

Recognizing the importance of international cooperation in responding to the emergency needs of Iraqi refugees and displaced persons and the alleviation of human suffering,

Taking note of the heavy burden placed on the people and Governments of host countries,

1. Commends the efforts of the Governments of the Islamic Republic of Iran and Turkey to provide Iraqi refugees with shelter, protection, food, health care and other humanitarian services, and welcomes the cooperation extended by host countries to the humanitarian agencies of the United Nations system and non-governmental organizations;

2. Expresses its appreciation for the assistance rendered by States, various organizations of the United Nations system and other governmental and non-governmental organizations to Iraqi refugees and displaced persons;

3. Welcomes with appreciation the initiatives of the Secretary-General in alleviating the human suffering of Iraqi refugees and displaced persons, including the designation of an Executive Delegate for the United Nations Humanitarian Programme for Iraq, Kuwait and the Iraq/Iran and Iraq/Turkey Border Areas;

4. Appeals to all States, appropriate organs and organizations of the United Nations system, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations and the international financial institutions to continue to provide the necessary resources for responding to the enormous needs of Iraqi refugees and displaced persons and recognizes the need to continue and improve further the

coordination between host countries, the humanitarian agencies of the United Nations system and non-governmental organizations;

5. Calls upon States concerned and the United Nations system to facilitate the safe and honourable return of Iraqi refugees and displaced persons to their homes;

6. Requests the Secretary-General to continue his efforts to mobilize the necessary financial and material assistance;

7. Requests the Executive Delegate of the Secretary-General for the United Nations Humanitarian Programme for Iraq, Kuwait and the Iraq/Iran and Iraq/Turkey Border Area to continue coordination with the appropriate specialized agencies in order to ensure the continuation of and to consolidate essential services to Iraqi refugees and displaced persons;

8. Requests the Secretary-General to report to the General Assembly at its forty-sixth session on the implementation of the present resolution.

21. The Second (Social) Committee also recommends to the Economic and Social Council the adoption of the following draft decision:

Report of the Secretary-General on the work being done within the United Nations system on improving quantitative and qualitative indicators on social conditions and standards of living

The Economic and Social Council takes note of the report of the Secretary-General on the work being done within the United Nations system on improving quantitative and qualitative indicators on social conditions and standards of living (A/46/137-E/1991/40).